THE

Theatrical Campaign,

FOR

MDCCLXVI. and MDCCLXVII.

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CONSISTING OF

TRAGEDY,	PANTOMIME,
COMEDY,	ANECDOTE,
FARCE,	AND
INTERLUDE,	SECRET HISTORY.

LONDON:

Printed for S. Bladon, in Pater-Noster-Row, 1767.

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THOUGH this hath been a very unprolific ſeaſon with regard to actors and actreſſes, the caſe has been quite different with reſpect to dramatic productions, as we have had ſome of almoſt every ſpecies.—Melpomene has, indeed, been leſs courted than Thalia; but which has the moſt reaſon to complain, will be in ſome meaſure evinced in the following pages.

The critics had long lamented, that all our modern bards preferred the Buſkin to the Sock, and that we were likely to bury the *Vis Comica* with Congreve and Hoadley: the efforts that have lately

been made in this department of the drama, if they do not prove that we have ſtill a true comic genius remaining amongſt us, are at leaſt teſtimonies that our preſent race of bards are ſuſceptible of correction, and emulous of pleaſing the town in thoſe paths that were the leaſt trod in, and which the theatrical world were deſirous of ſeeing occupied.

Before we enter upon the merits of thoſe pieces which have appeared this year, it may not be improper previouſly to conſider the ſtate of the drama before that time, and from thence judge what we might have expected from our preſent race of writers.

Mr. Colman had given us *The Jealous Wife*, which had great merit, and, perhaps, ſtood next in rank to *The Suſpicious Huſband*, ſince the time of Congreve, or at leaſt Cibber. He had alſo given us *The Deuce is in Him*, *Polly Honeycomb*, and *The Muſical Lady*, and as *petites pieces* were ſelf-recommended; and he had written, in conjunction with Mr. Garrick, *The Clandeſtine Marriage*. To this piece it has been objected, that the characters are *outrés*; the ſentiments, as well as incidents, are often forced; and the conduct and

denouëment

denouëment are defective. Lord Ogilvie is certainly a being not in nature; there never was ſuch a compound of folly and wit, foppery and ſentiment, vanity and decrepitude. Mr. Sterling may be but too juſt a repreſentation of real life; yet we could wiſh, for the honour of the metropolis, that he were entirely an original: ſo much ignorance, blended with ſo much ſordid cunning, was but a bad compliment in a portrait of the city, which is the conſtant and great ſupport of the theatres. The advocates for the piece may indeed ſay, that this laſt critique is at moſt but an object of foreign ſpeculation, and not within the pale of dramatic law. Agreed: but will they ſay the ſame when Sir John Melvil and Miſs Sterling make ſo ridiculous an appearance in the laſt ſcene? He ſhould either have not appeared, made ſome apology to the lady, or recanted and given her his hand. In return it may be aſked, What could he decently offer as an excuſe? and would it not have been inconſiſtent with the delicacy of his ſentiments, and the propriety of his notions, to be ſo eaſily weaned from Miſs Fanny in favour of her ſiſter? Then let him remain abſent, ſince he has nothing to ſay

to the purpoſe. Yes; but the lawyer would have loſt his joke, and the *alibi would not have been proved.* This indeed is the buſineſs of both theſe gentlemen in the laſt ſcene, whoſe preſence otherwiſe might very well be diſpenſed with.

Mr. Murphy had, for ſome years, been foremoſt upon the liſt of dramatic writers: his *Orphan of China*, his *Citizen* and *Upholſterer*, had ſecured to him unlimited applauſe, and the approbation of the ſevereſt critics. We do not think, however, his *Apprentice* was amongſt the number of thoſe pieces that did him any great honour; for, except the thought and the prologue, we can diſcover little or no merit belonging to it: Dick is character, ſentiment, fable, cataſtrophe, and every thing; and this every thing conſiſts in an heterogeneous jumble of various paſſages out of different plays; for there is no other writing in it. We ſhould not have been thus rigid upon this production, but that many ſhallow critics have run away with an opinion, that this is Mr. Murphy's beſt production; whereas, according to all the laws of criticiſm, it is abſolutely his worſt, without excepting *All in the Wrong*, or even *The School for Guardians.*

Mr.

Mr. Bickerſtaffe had met with the moſt unexpected ſucceſs in three productions, *Thomas and Sally*, *Love in a Village*, and *The Maid of the Mill*; nor was his *Daphne and Amyntor* without many advocates. To criticiſe upon the muſical part of theſe performances is out of our province; and, indeed, he ſecured himſelf from any attacks upon that head, at leaſt in the three latter, by adopting old tunes, and adapting new words to them. With reſpect to the poetry and conduct of the pieces, as they have ſtood the teſt of criticiſm, and are ſtill well received, it would be preſumptuous in us, at this time of day, to attempt pointing out any defects that may have eſcaped the curſory eye which viewed them through the falſe medium of popular applauſe, whilſt driven by the torrent of prejudice. We ſhall therefore only ſay, that he had raiſed the expectations of the town to their greateſt zenith, and every one was impatiently waiting for the harmonious phœnix, the offspring of his brain.

Theſe were the bards, upon whom the theatrical world had founded all their expectations for the æra of genius, 1767. Mr. Franklin and Mr. Hull might be con-

conſidered only as cadets in the ſervice, who had never yet been through a regular campaign; and the authors of ſome anonymous pieces, which we ſhall have occaſion to mention, were either unknown or unnoticed.

Without farther preface, we ſhall now impartially examine the merits and demerits of the various theatrical productions that have been exhibited during the courſe of this ſeaſon; and though, perhaps, we may not in every reſpect entirely pleaſe their authors, and though we may differ greatly from ſuch critics as have already given their opinions upon theſe ſubjects, as truth and candour are our only guides, the public, we flatter ourſelves, will not be diſpleaſed with theſe diſquiſitions.

THE

THE EARL OF WARWICK:

A TRAGEDY.

THIS is a tranſlation from the French tragedy of M. De la Harpe; an acknowledgment we expected to have met with, prefixed to the piece; which, however, the author has thought proper to omit or forget. We are ſorry to find the elegant tranſlator of Sophocles, who is the acknowledged author of this production, ſo very inattentive to the moſt ſtriking beauties of the original, that he hath copied the worſt, and paſſed over or mutilated ſome of the beſt paſſages in M. De la Harpe's piece. He has himſelf acknowledged, in the advertiſement prefixed, his deviation from hiſtorical truth; ſo that to tax him with it, would be but repeating his own words. "For the many faults "and imperfections of this piece (he ſays) "he can only plead that title to pardon, "which is generally extended in favour "of a firſt eſſay." Is it the *title*, or the *pardon*,

pardon, that is generally *extended?* and which does he *plead?* After three years labour upon ſo ſhort a tranſlation, we think there can be but little excuſe for inaccuracies of language and grammar, many of which are to be met with in the courſe of the play; and indeed the epilogue hath alſo its ſhare of theſe poetical licences. But theſe, we ſuppoſe, are to be imputed to the errors of the preſs, a *ſingle errata* (thus it is termed) having run through two editions, though corrected in the firſt upon the back of the title.

We ſhall ſay nothing of the proſaic poetry, or falſe metaphors, that are continually obtruding: the firſt may be conſidered as the eaſy dramatic ſtyle; and the latter, as the flights of an uncurbed imagination. Mr. Colman, in his prologue to this tragedy, ſeems very angry with walking poets, without conſidering, that the very bard he was writing for, ſtood preciſely in this predicament; and what is more, that in all probability the profits of his writings, at leaſt for the ſtage, will never enable him to keep even a *Tim-Whiſky*, though his productions may go through two imaginary editions.

THE

THE PERPLEXITIES:

A COMEDY.

MR. HULL *, (to whom this piece is aſcribed) tells us in his advertiſement, that he is entirely indebted for the fable to an old play, wrote by Sir Samuel Tuke, called *The Adventures of Five Hours*, of which piece Echard, in his Tranſlation of *Terence*, after noticing ſome particular excellencies, gives this general character, *viz.* "This is one of the pleaſanteſt ſtories that ever appeared upon "our ſtage, and has as much variety of "plots and intrigues, without any thing "being precipitated or unnatural as to the "main action." We ſhould be ſorry to diſpute an opinion of Mr. Echard, adopted by Mr. Hull; but we muſt acknowledge, that it has not ſtruck us in any ſuch light: the incidents are very unnatural and forced; the characters are in many re-

* If this gentleman ſhould not be the author of it, the foundling muſt be dropt at the door of Mrs. Griffith.

ſpects *outrés* and extravagant, where marked by any diſtinguiſhing features, but are in general ſo near akin, that the ſpeech of one might be put in the mouth of another, on a ſimilar occaſion, without the leaſt impropriety; the manners are ſuch a jumble of Engliſh and Spaniſh, that they ſeem to be of a mongrel breed: the whole piece reſembles a game at Blind-man's Buff; and, conſidering how often the candles are put out, we think the author has had a very lucky eſcape with his neck and benefits *; for indeed it might, with more propriety, be called *The Abſurdities* than *The Perplexities*. Felicia has very aptly given a character of this performance, without the author's intending it: "Since the days of "Don Quixote, to this preſent ſeven "o'clock in the evening, ſure never was "a better ſubject for romance." Could we lay aſide probability, conſiſtency, and a few other neceſſary qualities of the drama, this piece might perhaps be conſidered as a rational production; but ſuch a comedy of errors, brought about by back doors, private ſtair-caſes, and falſe keys, might pleaſe the romantic taſte of

* Mr. Hull performed the part of *Don Juan*.

the

the Spaniards, but will never bear the teſt of Engliſh criticiſm.

Guzman is the humouriſt of the play, a copy of Sancho Pancha with all his defects, but none of his agreeable features: we ſhall give a ſpecimen of his genius, when he is ordered to fetch a chair.

Guz. The chair is come, ſir, juſt as I expected.

Hen. Where is it?

Guz. Even where it was. The chairmen are ſo deeply engaged at cards, they ſwear they will not ſtir for all the dons in Seville.

Henriquez is one of the moſt inconſiſtent characters ever drawn for the ſtage. He is deeply enamoured with Felicia; but his pride is ſo great, it will not let him make a declaration of his paſſion; and all his anxiety and attention are excited for the marriage of his ſiſter, who is a fine ſpirited girl, and therefore reſolves to provide for herſelf. Florio, who is admired by Honoria, is the object of Henriquez's peculiar averſion, and the object of his mortal reſentment; yet he is very eaſily perſuaded to approve of his ſiſter's marriage with Florio, and his miſtreſs's with his intended brother-in-law. The

fiery

fiery turbulent Henriquez thus eaſily ſubmits to the correction of the poet's pen, and changes all his diſpoſitions, temper, and paſſions, to accommodate himſelf to the concluſion of the piece. It would be very agreeable for a dramatic writer always to meet with ſuch pliant characters, if they were but in nature.

THE FAIRY FAVOUR.

THIS little piece, generally attributed to Mr. Hull, was meant as a compliment to his royal highneſs the Prince of Wales, and is ſo trifling that it ſcarce comes within the limits of criticiſm.

PANTOMIME.

HARLEQUIN DOCTOR FAUSTUS.

MR. Rich, the late manager of Covent-Garden theatre, was certainly the Genius of Pantomime in England; and, though this was the moſt irrational amuſement that could poſſibly be offered the public, he found means to get more money in one ſeaſon by Harlequin, than his rival cotemporaries could do in three or four, with all the aſſiſtance of Shakeſpeare and the Muſes. Mr. Woodward is his ſucceſſor in this province, and the managers have found their account in the application of his talents this way; yet we cannot help thinking, that it muſt be a very diſagreeable proſtitution, for ſo good a comedian to be ſkipping about the ſtage for an hour or two, without meaning or deſign. The abſurdity of pantomimes does not only conſiſt in their being abſolutely improbable, but in their ſimilitude of plot (if any ſuch can be allowed

lowed them) the conſtant running acroſs the ſtage with imaginary red-hot pokers, Scrub's ridiculous unvariegated blunders, and particularly that Columbine, who is repreſented as a beautiful young lady, ſhould always prefer a black-faced Merry-Andrew to any other lover. The play of *Othello* has been condemned for the improbability of Deſdemona's being enamoured with a black; but had all Shakeſpeare's plays had black heroes, the critics would not have ſpared even ſo great a bard. We would therefore recommend to the manufacturers of pantomimes, if ſuch there muſt be, to ſtudy novelty in incidents and characters; and though we are told there ſhould, ſtrictly, be no ſpeaking in pantomime, we could almoſt forego the impropriety, for the ſake of a little wit and humour, which this barbarous region of the ſtage preſents ſo wild a field for. To criticiſe a pantomime, according to its preſent plan, is to approve or cenſure the ſcene-ſhifters and trap-door drawers, the agility of a leap, or the clumſineſs of a fall: upon which principle we pronounce *Doctor Fauſtus*, as it is now repreſented, to have *inexpreſſible* merit.

THE SCHOOL FOR GUARDIANS.

IN deſpite of all the critics have ſaid, in deſpite of the foreſtalling *Country Girl* at Drury-Lane, in deſpite of the many diſadvantages under which this comedy hath appeared, we will venture to pronounce it far from the moſt contemptible performance that has been uſhered upon the ſtage this ſeaſon.

To account for ſome of theſe diſadvantages, we muſt acquaint the reader, in the words of the author, that " this play " was written above three years ago, and " that, when finiſhed, it was given to " Miſs Elliot; and it ſo happened, that " ſhe had no opportunity of producing it " till this ſeaſon. When, in September " laſt, her bargain both for herſelf and " the play was in agitation with Mr. " Beard, the author of theſe ſheets was " aſtoniſhed to hear, that *The Country* " *Girl* was actually in rehearſal at Drury-" Lane, and that the parts had been given " out in the ſummer, nay, *as faſt as they*

" *were*

" *were written.* This, it muſt not be diſ-
" ſembled, looked like a *deſign of fore-*
" *ſtalling the market*; eſpecially as it was
" underſtood, that Miſs ELLIOT and *The*
" *School for Guardians* had been offered,
" the ſpring before, to the manager of
" Drury-Lane, upon *his own terms.* A
" remonſtrance was immediately made to
" Mr. GARRICK, purporting that he,
" who had long been a manager of a ſuc-
" ceſsful theatre, was going to enter into
" competition with a young actreſs for the
" profits of a play. A meeting enſued,
" where a gentleman, of the firſt charac-
" ter for probity and genius, was ſo ob-
" liging as to be the arbitrator. Mr. Gar-
" rick there proteſting, that he never
" heard of Miſs Elliot's play till within
" a few days, it was thereupon deter-
" mined, that it was in that caſe an ac-
" cidental claſhing, but that a deſign of
" foreſtalling would have been *illiberal* and
" unhandſome. This laſt point of ho-
" nour Mr. Garrick ſeemed to learn upon
" this occaſion."

The reader is left to judge, from this genteel inſinuation, how far the hint of *The Country Girl* was taken from Mr. Murphy's deſign. The principal accu-

ſations

ſations againſt this piece are, that it is moſtly borrowed; and that the French writers, whom this author has called in to his aid, have long ſince been ranſacked by the Engliſh poets. But let not theſe cenſures, if founded in truth, deprive the author of ſuch merit as is his own, and which the two firſt acts plainly demonſtrate. We have not yet ſeen a fair quotation from this play, in all the various critiques that have appeared upon it; we ſhall therefore ſelect a paſſage or two, that an impartial judgment may be formed of the dialogue and ſentiments.

Brumpton and *Belford*. Act I.

Bel. Po! po! running on at the old rate. —If ſelf-applauſe be philoſophy, you have a comfortable ſhare.

Brump. I have, Sir; and while my happineſs is preſerved by it, keep you the gravity and good ſenſe that make you too refined to be pleaſed, too wiſe to be merry, and too knowing to be contented. I am in a fair way of being ſucceſsful without any trouble at all;—you are likely to be moſt ſcurvily diſappointed after a world of pains.—An humble bow, which

my dancing-maſter taught me, while I laughed at him—a faſhionable coat, for which, if my taylor is ever paid, he will laugh at me—an intriguing ſnuff-box, and an apt valet de chambre—all theſe make love for me, and——

Bel. And you aſſume the merit of the conqueſt?

Brump. Oh, yes; when the trouble is over, I take the reward.—Did you ever know a general officer, who, when the horſe and the foot, and the right and the left wing have carried the day for him, did not claim to himſelf both the honour and the booty? But you make a toil of pleaſure.—Love, which to me is a ſcene of delight, to you is a drudgery: your temper grows as ſour, as a bride's when the ſermon is too long; and as hot as a Welſhman's, if you laugh at his pedigre; or a profeſſed ſharper's, if you doubt his honour, after he has cogged the dice, and picked your pocket of your money.

Belf. Why, I own I am piqued, and naturally. If any friend of mine, out of mere ſpleen, ſpeak detractingly of the perſon I admire; it were baſe infidelity in love, not to defend her when ſhe is diſparaged—My every thought is dedicated to her—

her.—Abſent I ſee her, hear her, and my imagination gloats for ever on her charms.

Brump. And you are ſo eaſily alarmed, that little difficulties are the Alps and Pyreneans in your way.—Now, my faith in theſe matters removes mountains.—But, indeed, in all things we are oppoſite characters.—If a tradeſman brings you in a bill, and preſſes for payment, "'Sdeath! does the ſcoundrel doubt my "honour? Does he mean to affront me?" —Now I, when my father ſuffered me to be arreſted, went chearfully into confinement, and diverted myſelf for three weeks together with the bum-bailiff's character.—In the buſineſs of the ſofter paſſions, the ſame humour purſues us.—You write ſtudied letters to your Dulcinea; I am written to.—You ſigh, I ſing.—You fret, I am gay.—You, upon a diſappointment, "Furies! death! and rage!—"there is no enduring this—Life is grown "a burden—Damnation!"—I burſt into a laugh, and "What a whimſical world "we live in!—ha! ha!" But, come, I will hear your melancholy ſtory.—Well, the old dragon, I ſuppoſe, watches the Heſperian fruit.

Belf. He does, ſir.—He locks her up, as a miſer does his gold, not to be made uſe of till his death, and then to fall into hands that won't know the value of it.—It's love's laſt ſhift, whilſt ſhe is inacceſſible; and her guardian, old Lovibond, propoſes to marry her himſelf.

Brump. And ſo, like the tyrant of old, intends to tack a living and dead body together.

Belf. Even ſo, my dear Brumpton: there ſhould be an act of parliament to hinder theſe old fellows from ſtopping the propagation of the ſpecies.

Brump. You are too hard upon them—they are ſeldom guilty of that miſchief.—I have known them have twins at a birth; that is, when ſome ſuch coxcomb as myſelf gives them a helping hand; and then the old fellow cocks his hat upon it, and totters about ſo vigorouſly, wondering how the babes reſembled him in every particular; whilſt the mother knows ſhe followed the example of the Grecian painter, and took a feature from every one of her acquaintance.—If he prevents your marrying her, take your revenge that way.

Belf. Prophanation!—Her virtue, ſir.—Beſides, the world could never repair the loſs.—

loſs.—Her heart, I am ſure, is mine.—I uſed to viſit her—but now no admittance. —An evidence on the crown's ſide in a meſſenger's hand is not better ſecured.

Oldcaſtle. She is ſnug in a little box of a houſe, which I have taken in the name of Mr. Biddulph. I have another lodging in my own name, when I do buſineſs, &c.——

Brumpton and *Oldcaſtle.*

Brump. How her old gaoler will look, when he returns to town, and finds ſhe has broke priſon! I ſhall be deemed the very Maçhiavel of intrigue! Hey! is not that Mr. Oldcaſtle?

Oldc. Mr. Brumpton, I rejoice to ſee you.

Brump. My dear friend, you are come in the very criſis of my fate, in that dear extatic moment, when, to the natural vivacity of a gay, giddy temper, like mine, ten thouſand circumſtances concur to lift me to the upper regions of delight, which, together with the felicity of encountering the only man in the world, that

that — I muſt take breath — I am faint with bliſs—it is too much——

Oldc. Ay! your fever is pretty high, I ſee.—Recover your ſenſes a little, and tell me at your leiſure what is this mighty buſineſs.

Brump. Oh! buſineſs of ſuch a nature —the gods are now in council upon it.—I expect Mercury every moment, in the ſhape of my man Briſk, to let me know, that the nectared ſweets that dwell upon the lips of a certain lady, are intended for a wild, unthinking coxcomb, as the world is pleaſed to call me.

Oldc. To be ſure, you are in requeſt among the ladies, no doubt.—Now will he lye like an attorney's clerk, *(aſide.)* You are going to help ſome worthy gentleman to an heir to his eſtate, I warrant me——

Brump. I have done ſome ſervice in that way; but the truth is, I am now going to help my father to a grandſon.

Oldc. Going to be married! ——

Brump. This day may perhaps crown my joys.—Some certain fumblers at this end of the town, who were a little alarmed at the proportions of this leg, intend to light their windows upon it; and the court

court of aldermen are preparing all demonſtrations of joy; and their unhappy wives are going into deep mourning upon the occaſion.

Oldc. The ſame confident fop he ever was! And my friend Theodore, what ſays he to all this?

Brump. You know his way; the ſame old crabbed humour. — He has made a match for me elſewhere, with one that—I—would not deny the lady her merit.—She preſerves, pickles well, and is a very notable keeper of accounts.—The woman will do very well, of a long winter's evening, to ſay, Bleſs you, when you ſneeze ——but——

Oldc. She has a fortune, I preſume.

Brump. Does not want acres.

Oldc. And you prefer one without any?

Brump. You miſtake me; ſhe is an heireſs.—It is not clear that ſhe is of age; but as ſoon as ſhe comes to years of diſcretion——

Oldc. Then ſhe may play the fool as faſt as ſhe will.

Brump. By chuſing me, you think, ſhe will give a ſpecimen of her folly. — Ha! ha! I have paſſed many hours with her of late; ſhe is beautiful as an angel. —— Now,

Now, my dear ſir, you can do me the moſt eſſential ſervice.——You have great influence over Sir Theodore.——I dare not break this matter to him myſelf, but a word from you——

Oldc. And has ſhe really an eſtate?

Brump. A very fine one—a large number of acres, and a *coal-pit** upon one of the manors.

Oldc. I profeſs I like your taſte——ha! ha! The coal-pit whitens her ſkin, and ſhe may hereafter wear a few of her own acres in each ear.——I will ſee my old friend about this, and will poſitively promote your welfare.——He ſhall agree to it, and——but how did you bring this about, pray?

Brump. An old way that I have.——I came, ſaw and conquered.——I ſaw her at her window.——Such becoming ſweetneſs! Her eyes were through my heart at once.——Love inſpired me with due courage.

Oldc. That was right—a bold ſtroke for a wife!

Brump. I drank tea with her the very

* The indecent addition, which Mr. Woodward introduced here, was neither the produce of the author's pen, nor did it meet with his approbation.

next evening.—I muſt indeed admit, that her underſtanding is not the moſt accompliſhed.

Oldc. So beſt: never marry a wit.

Brump. She is at preſent rather in a ſtate of ignorance; but from thoſe blue eyes ſhe occaſionally darts ſuch glances, as beſpeak a mind ſuſceptible of the higheſt refinement.

Oldc. Where does ſhe live?

Brump. In the very next ſtreet.

Oldc. What, that ſtreet there?

Brump. Yes, that—yes, that, under the care of the verieſt muck-worm—

Oldc. He means me, I fear. (*aſide*). And her name, pray—

Brump. Miſs Mary-Ann Richly—

Oldc. Wounds! what a diſcovery here is! (*aſide.*)

Brump. Her guardian's name is Biddulph—perhaps you may know him—

Oldc. No—not I—the young rake-hell! (*aſide.*)

Brump. He means to abuſe his truſt, and confine youth and beauty within the arms of age and uglineſs——There's an old rogue for you! Does not he deſerve to be hanged?

Oldc. What a young villain! (*aſide*).

Brump. I beg your pardon; I did not hear——

Oldc. I am ſeized with an ugly fit of coughing. (*Coughs*)——But you ſhould conſider, the marriage-act is very ſtrict, and requires the conſent of prudent people——

Brump. Po! that's nothing——Abuſe Scotland as they will, it enables us to evade the laws of England.——My dear Mr. Oldcaſtle, you have promiſed me you would ſpeak to my father——

Oldc. Ay! I'll certainly keep my word —He ſhall—certainly know how you are going on—I'll do you that good turn, you may depend——

Brump. My dear good friend—it is ſo lucky that I—met with you——

Oldc. I am heartily glad I met you, indeed——

Brump. Well, now adieu!——Oh! but I forgot to tell you—ſhe'll be mine this very day.—Briſk, my fellow, who is a footman of talents, is to go to her as a tenant from the country, come to town with old Biddulph's commands to carry her down with him in the fly.—She is ſo ſimple ſhe will believe it; and the oafs about her will bite like gudgeons—and

ſo

ſo—ha! ha!—I kindle into rapture;—I muſt fly to know the happy tidings—and ſo fare ye well—You'll ſpeak to my father—

Oldc. I'll do for you there.

Brump. A million thanks to you—Ha! ha! Is not this a charming adventure? Ha! ha! Did you ever know ſo happy a rogue? (*Exit.*)

Oldc. (*alone*). I never knew ſo abandoned a young profligate, nor ſo damned an adventure! If the fellow is lurking about my doors, I'll ſwear a robbery againſt him; I'll deſcribe him from head to foot, and ſwear he ſtole a horſe in Northamptonſhire—I have not a moment to loſe—and then, my young madam, bag and baggage away into the country.

Had the author continued thus, throughout the piece, to have ſupplied us from his own fund of genius, we ſhould not have been compelled to upbraid him with adding to the number of tranſlators and imitators; and he would probably have met with that approbation which his works in general have received.

THE COUNTRY GIRL:

A COMEDY.

THIS is Wycherly's *Country Wife* altered; and we are told, in the advertiſement prefixed, that the firſt motive for attempting it was the deſire of ſhewing Miſs Reynolds to advantage. So far the preſent editor has ſucceeded; nor do we think his deſign of purifying Wycherly's language from obſcenity is undeſerving of praiſe. We cannot, however, conſider this as a new piece, but as a revival of an old play; though there are ſeveral ſcenes in it that are new, and which we think an improvement. This is the play which Mr. Murphy complains of the *market being foreſtalled with*, as there is doubtleſs a great ſimilitude in the characters of Mary-Ann and Peggy.

THE CUNNING MAN:

A Muſical Entertainment.

THIS is a tranſlation of Rouſſeau's *Devin du Village*, the execution of which cannot be commended, as the poetry partakes ſo much of that mediocrity which Horace pronounces incongruous with the art. But the principal ſucceſs of this little piece muſt have depended upon the muſical execution, which does not come within the department of our plan.

THE

THE ACCOMPLISHED MAID:

A Comic Opera.

ANOTHER muſical tranſlation, which is ſtill more deſtitute of the beauties of poetry than the former. The tranſlator does not, indeed, ſeem very well acquainted with his original, as the title will teſtify, by his tranſlating *La Buona Figliuola*, The Accompliſhed Maid.

NECK OR NOTHING:

A FARCE.

THE modeſty of the author of this piece is pretty conſpicuous in the advertiſement prefixed: he tells us very ingenuouſly, he will claim no merit that does

does not belong to him, and acknowledges his obligation to the celebrated author of *Gil Blas*, and *Criſpin Rival de ſon Maitre*. If Mr. Le Sage were alive, I believe he would not return the compliment, and acknowledge his obligation to the author for having done him the honour of endeavouring to tread in his ſteps. The writer of this piece has, however, been lucky in his title, which is well adapted; *Neck or—NOTHING.*

C Y M O N:

A Dramatic Romance.

THIS foundling, who hath not yet met with a father to adopt it, nevertheleſs came into the world with ſo many advantages, that it is imagined he is of very high lineage in the theatrical world. If the child was not of itſelf handſome, to ſupply its want of beauty, even in its ſwaddling-clothes, he received all the advantages of finery; and to this

we

we may principally attribute the reſpect he has met with. The hint of this romance ſeems to be taken from the fable of Dryden's Cymon and Iphigenia, which is wrought into all the extravagance of ſorcery, enchantment, and deluſion. There are, however, ſome pretty airs in it, which, added to the advantages of muſic, ſcenery and decoration, carried it through a run with applauſe.

LOVE

LOVE IN THE CITY:

A Comic Opera.

SUCCESS ſeems to have turned this poor author's brain, or at leaſt made him fancy, that he might write and ſay what he pleaſed with impunity. Nat. Lee, as great a candidate for Bedlam as he was, would certainly never have inſulted his audience with ſuch a preface: he acknowledges the ridicule of operas, in which the moſt ſerious things are told in a quaver; yet he thinks he has a right to be thus ridiculous with impunity: he prides himſelf for his production being entirely LOW, and which, according to his opinion, increaſes its merit ſo much, that he has diſtinguiſhed this particular qualification in capitals; and, though he has paid the Ducheſs of Northumberland a linſey-wolſey home-ſpun Grub-ſtreet compliment in his dedication, yet he is

of opinion, and he boldly aſſerts it, that illuſtrious perſons are the worſt company in the world. As to the city, he has very modeſtly eſtimated its characteriſtic probity, by accuſing an opulent trader with defrauding his cuſtomers of ſeventy-five per cent. in the ſmalleſt articles. With reſpect to the audience in general, we find how very cheap he holds them, by giving them this modeſt piece of advice: "I "would adviſe thoſe of my auditors, who "do not taſte it [the beauty of his piece] "at firſt hearing, to give it a ſecond, nay, "a third or fourth; and after that, ſhould "they never deſire to hear it again, I "can only tell them, they happen to diſ-"like what has been repeatedly approved "by all the polite nations of Europe."

Indeed, Mr. B——, after this, it would not have been ſurpriſing, if you had perſonally told the audience, they were all a parcel of fools, and were condemning what they did not underſtand. Such a conduct might have expoſed you a little; but an apology might have taken place, and the next day you might have acquainted the public in the papers, that, as *ſome* of the audience ſeemed diſſatisfied with your opera, you and the manager had agreed

to

to *withdraw* it. *Suppreſs* it would have been too harſh a word, no doubt: beſides, it does not convey an idea of the performance being actually done behind the ſcenes for your private amuſement.

Another teſtimonial of your modeſty cannot eſcape the moſt curſory reader. "If any one ſhould be maliciouſly inclined "to apply the hackneyed quotation of--A "mountain's in labour, and brings forth "a mouſe; let it be remembered, that I "do not want to paſs my mouſe for a "lion: I give it for what it is, a little "ſqueaking thing, that has been pro-"duced with greater pains than it ſeems "to require; certainly, with more than "it deſerves."

Here he has conſidered the audience as ſo many cats, who were to be diverted with his mouſe; and they have retaliated the compliment, by hunting his little ſqueaking thing into a hole, from whence it will never again make its appearance. This was really laying a trap for himſelf, and ſure enough he has been caught in it.

In whatever light we conſider this production, it is equally contemptible. Whether we examine the ſentiments, the characters, the fable, or the poetry, we muſt

acknowledge, he has fully and juſtly characteriſed them by LOW. The ſong which he puts into Shuter's mouth, is ſaid to be the beſt in it: let us then, by the ſample, judge of the reſt.

There was a pretty maid, ſhe met a gentleman,
And ſoon to chat of this and that,
Together they began:
They talk'd of politics, they talk'd of winds and tide,
Of weather, ſtock, and what's o'clock,
And other things beſide.

Then ſaid the gentleman, Oh! charming pretty maid!
A little bit let's go and ſit,
My dear, in yonder ſhade.
Then ſtrait reply'd the maid, Oh, ſir, excuſe me, pray!
Who? I go there? For ſhame!—forbear!
Lord! what would people ſay!

He told her of the bliſs; ſhe told him of the ſin;
He pull'd, he ſwore; ſhe ſaid no more!
And ſo they both went in.
And here my ſtory ends; perhaps the whole's a lye.
It may be ſo, for what I know;
You have it cheap as I.

The harmony of the numbers, the elegance of the diction, the novelty of the thought, and the chaſtity of the expreſſion, ſeem emulous of outvying each other in this extraordinary ballad. I had like to have forgot the muſical beauties of the air—

air—but that is not the poet's legal property, as he ſmuggled it from France in his laſt voyage.

As you are very fond, Mr. B——, of advice, will you give me leave to offer you a bit in return? In the next production with which you propoſe amuſing the town, do not be ſo much afraid of throwing in a little ſentiment, a little wit, and a little ſenſe: believe me, it need not be quite ſo LOW; and you may, without any danger, write what your audience are capable of underſtanding: neither is it abſolutely neceſſary, that they ſhould be quite ſo much inſulted; and, as to any *little ſqueaking things* which may be engendered by the vapours of your brain, I would have you keep them at home, to amuſe your cat or your monkey with.

THE

THE ENGLISH MERCHANT:

A COMEDY.

MR. Colman juſtly acknowledges, that the fable, principal characters, and cataſtrophe of this piece, are borrowed from Monſ. de Voltaire's comedy, called *L'Ecoſſoiſe:* the conduct, ſentiments, incidents, and language of the *Engliſh Merchant*, we may, nevertheleſs, look to him for. The propriety of the title is very diſputable, as Mr. Freeport is ſo far from being the hero, that he is but a very ſubordinate character, or mere inſtrument in bringing about the incidents; and he conveys ſo little the idea of an *Engliſh Merchant*, as well from his language as behaviour, that he appears, by his own account, to be nothing more than an itinerant trader. The abruptneſs, not to ſay impertinence, of his conduct upon his firſt interview with Amelia, is ſuch as could

could not be ſuppoſed admiſſable from an utter ſtranger, in the preſence of a lady of her delicacy. But to make amends for theſe improprieties, and curry favour with the city, he unites benevolence, charity, and philanthropy, in their higheſt perfection. The inconſiſtency of Freeport's character, as a penetrating, cautious, judicious trader, is ſtill higher coloured, by his being ſo laviſh of his bounty at firſt ſight to a woman whom he knew nothing of, and who might have been an errant impoſtor. Again, when he finds himſelf really in love with her, and nobody diſputes his pretenſions, nay, when he ſeems to have the conſent of both the lady and her father, and even Lord Falbridge himſelf withdraws all his claim to Amelia, yet Mr. Freeport, out of mere complaiſance and politeneſs, reſigns the lady in his favour. Is this punctiliouſneſs conſiſtent with any part of his former rough unpoliſhed character? Spatter, we hope, from his general complexion, is a mere creature of the brain, though he is the man of moſt buſineſs throughout the play, which might with more juſtneſs have been entitled *The Villain*. Notwithſtanding theſe ſtrictures are founded in truth

truth and impartiality, we muſt acknowledge this is the beſt dramatic production that hath appeared this campaign; though it may perhaps owe its ſucceſs, in a great meaſure, to the impotency of its rivals, as well as to the direct tendency of the title, and compliment thereby conveyed in oppoſition to *Love in the City*, which made Mr. Cockney appear ſo ridiculous, if not contemptible.

This piece, though the moſt promiſing of any that hath appeared this year, was not judged to have ſufficient merit to carry it through a run, without a farce tacked to it. A dialogue that took place in the Green-room, upon this occaſion, may perhaps illuſtrate the ſubject better than any other recital of the cauſe of this propoſal.

Manager. I tell you, George, it will never do without.—The curtain drew up only at a quarter before ſeven; and now it is but half paſt eight, and the epilogue is ſpeaking.

Poet. Would you have had me ſpoil the piece, and ruin the unity of time and place, to pleaſe the galleries? I had half a dozen epiſodes ready.—But what would Voltaire have

have ſaid, if I had made any innovation upon his plan?

Man. But you hear, they cry out it is only a farce, and that there ſhould, at leaſt, have been two tacked together, or the audience be admitted at half-price.

Poet. Low criticiſm—vulgar wit—mere envy and deſpair.

Man. Let me tell you, there's no glory in playing to empty benches; and you know how much paper has been circulated to-day.

Poet. To-morrow's my night, and I'll venture to ſay the houſe will be cram full without a ſingle order.

Man. Your friends may oblige you for once; but will that carry you through a run?

Poet. Did my *Jealous Wife*—did *The Clandeſtine Marriage* want a farce tacked to them? No; it is only flinging ten pounds away, and I wo'n't agree to it.

Man. Your obſtinacy and violence have always been prejudicial to you.—Remember when you called Virginia an iſland in the *Connoiſſeur*, and would not recant—remember the letter that you wrote about old Square-Toes, which coſt you two thouſand a year.

Poet. I did not expect ſuch treatment as this from you—but ſince I find you want to exert your tyranny over authors as well as players, I ſhall know where to apply with my next piece.—I ſhall diſabuſe the world with regard to the hand you had in *The Clandeſtine Marriage*, and ſhew that all your farces have been either piracies or tranſlations.

Theſe are the dramatic productions that were meant to entertain and inſtruct the town in a rational manner during the courſe of this ſeaſon. How far the managers have accompliſhed either of theſe deſigns, the impartial auditors, and the preſent impartial readers, are left to determine.

Some conteſts have ariſen in the Green-room, and elſewhere, between managers, actors, and poets, which we have taken occaſion to mention: Mrs. Bellamy has alſo thought herſelf ill uſed to be thrown out of ſome of her parts, in favour of younger actreſſes, whilſt ſhe flattered herſelf her perſon, merit, and abilities, entitled her to fill them with greater elegance and propriety, than the uſurpers of her province; and ſhe has been led to the ridiculous

diculous meaſure of expoſing her altercation to the public in hand-bills. A certain doctor has been guilty of an equally-ridiculous expedient of abuſing Mr. Beard in print, becauſe he would not act his play. The only plauſible excuſe for this publication, and the only complaint which this ſon of Galen has the leaſt pretence to make, is, that Mr. Beard kept his comedy two years: but then he owns, that during that period he never called or ſent for it: and it is well known, that poets have often ſuch uncommon flights, it is difficult to aſcertain on which ſide of the water is their poſitive reſidence.

And now, that we have acquitted Mr. Beard of any underhand dealing with reſpect to this medical bard, we will, as his friends, venture to give him ſome advice that many wiſh he would follow. He has now entertained the town for near thirty years; and all the world have acknowledged, that to the talents of our beſt Engliſh ſinger he has united the conduct of a gentleman: but, as nature muſt give way to time, ſo will his muſical abilities; and if, as it is ſuſpected from our laſt hearing him in Comus, he has loſt ſome of his front teeth, we recommend him to re-

recollect Quin ſaid—*He would whiſtle Falſtaff for no man.*

It is time to draw to a concluſion, and we are ſorry to find a diſagreeable apoſtrophe obtrude itſelf upon us.

How is the genius of England fallen! Fancy, wit and invention, have certainly deſerted us. Nothing but indifferent tranſlations, or flat imitations*, to ſupply the ſtage! Have the French ingroſſed all the poetry and good ſenſe of this æra? Or muſt Italian ribaldry, and Spaniſh quixotiſm, be ſubſtituted for Engliſh Sterling ſentiment? Such droſs ſurely will never be allowed to paſs current, if there be any native mines of genuine ore ſtill unexhauſted!

* *Love in the City* is the only original piece that hath appeared this ſeaſon, and this we acknowledge to be *truly original*. *Neck or Nothing* cannot be conſidered in any other light than an *abortion*; and *Cymon*, mere ſcenery and decoration.

FINIS.